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Capacity-building for development

Strengthening governance and public administration capacities for development

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

The present note by the Secretariat has been prepared on the basis of the inputs provided by the members of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration. The Committee adopted the theme of capacity-building for development, including post-conflict reconstruction of public administration and crisis/disaster management, as the main agenda item for its seventh session. This note has been prepared to establish an understanding of capacity development in theory and practice, to outline the present needs and challenges of countries in strengthening their governance and public administration capacities, and to offer a framework for the Committee's discussion and recommendations for Member States, the Economic and Social Council and the United Nations Secretariat in pursuing capacity development objectives and activities in developing countries.

It is now understood that institutional and human capacities, governance and development are interdependent and in a relationship of reciprocal cause and effect. In times of radical transformation and crises, new and renewed forms of governance and public administration capacities are needed to achieve sustainable, people-centred, pro-poor governance and development. This note surveys capacity development issues and challenges and, in so doing, outlines three interdependent levels of governance and public administration capacities: the systems level, the

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organizational level and the individual level. The systems level reviews transparent and accountable management of elections, legislative, executive and judicial processes, and interface with civil society. The organizational level considers strategic planning, partnership-building and networking, team-building, decentralization, and service-delivery. The individual level addresses effective leadership, career development and professional human resources management, responsiveness to community organizations and individual citizens, and the nature of well-functioning professional associations.

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I. Introduction

1. The Committee of Experts on Public Administration adopted the theme of capacity-building for development, including post-conflict reconstruction of public administration and crisis/disaster management, as the main agenda item for its seventh session. The present note has been prepared, on the basis of the inputs provided by the members of the Committee, to establish an understanding of capacity development in theory and practice, to outline the present needs and challenges of countries in strengthening their governance and public administration capacities, and to offer a framework for the Committee's discussion and recommendations for Member States, the Economic and Social Council and the United Nations Secretariat in pursuing capacity development objectives and activities in developing countries.

2. The Committee began its discussion on capacity development at its inaugural session in 2002. At that session, the Committee identified six priority areas in which Member States could build capacity to implement the United Nations Millennium Declaration:[1] (a) the public sector must recruit and retain its fair share of the best talent; (b) public sector institutions must become strategic and strong "learning organizations" in a globalized and knowledge-based economy; (c) public sector institutions should utilize the power of information and communication technologies (ICT) in support of innovation and good governance; (d) Governments should align their finance and management systems to ensure the optimal mobilization and use of resources; (e) Governments should design and implement effective combinations of decentralization and centralization policies and programmes in order to promote people-centred development; and (f) public sector institutions should support evidence-based international data.

3. Since then, Member States reaffirmed their commitment to the development goals identified in the United Nations Millennium Declaration as well as those agreed to at other major international conferences. The 2005 World Summit took stock of progress in reaching these goals, and also identified good governance as cutting across the entire United Nations development agenda. Member States agreed that good governance and rule of law at the national and international levels are essential for sustained economic growth, sustainable development, and the eradication of poverty and hunger. More recently, Member States also agreed that good governance and State capacity were central in linking the United Nations pillar of peace and security with that of development as well as in responding to the fallouts of climate change.

4. In this light, and given that Member States are halfway towards reaching the deadline of 2015 for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, the Committee has decided to deepen its work on capacity development. In so doing, the Committee will also consider the additional reconstruction needs of post-conflict States, and the needs of States managing crises and natural disasters, this because it has also become apparent that blueprint approaches are no longer adequate in today's globalized world. That there are deficiencies of capacity development in the public sector has been corroborated throughout the development field. This is especially true for those countries in crisis and post-conflict situations where the underlying governance parameters and challenges are very different from those of

[1] See General Assembly resolution 55/2.

countries with relatively stable institutions and established policymaking processes. In a world that is constantly changing, capacity-building is an integral part of reforms directed towards building more legitimate governance processes and more effective public administrations.

5. Governance involves managing the interactions of government, civil society and the private sector for societal transformation and development, including the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. Governance today is understood as a "transformative process" reflecting the shift from a focus on a narrow political framework involving the elite to a broader conceptualization including the masses and new social movements. Public administration, which implements political decisions and government policies aimed at organizing and managing the public life of a country and its citizens, is part and parcel of governance. Some have likened governance to the lifeblood of political systems, and public administration to the arteries within which the energies ebb and flow. The needs of public administration, which are closely linked to those of governance but inherently distinct from them, have undergone a spiral of changes in the age of globalization. New and renewed discourses on legitimacy, new actors, innovative techniques and strategies in functional practice, and interaction of public entities with one another and with the larger world are among the changes in the defining parameters of public administration today. For the least developed countries, there is also the mounting pressure to meet targets towards addressing the basic needs of their populace within internationally agreed time frames.

6. Governance and public administration capacities are essential for sustainable human development in political, economic, social and environmental contexts, particularly at three different yet interrelated levels of action. At the systems level, governance and public administration capacities are needed to design and develop institutions, processes and policies. Assistance to electoral management bodies, instruments for priority-setting and collective decision-making for the executive, support to an effective judiciary, and participatory mechanisms for engaging the civil society are among the main systems-level capacity-building measures. Organizationally, capacity development ensures the establishment of effective networks, teams and functional communities. Some public administration capacity-building niches include strategic planning, partnerships and networking through the application of ICT, team-building, decentralization, and easy access to, and effective delivery of, public services. At the individual public servant level, capacity-building and development rely on effective leadership, career development and professional human resources management, responsiveness to community organizations and individual citizens, and active professional associations and functional communities of practice.

7. In the least developed countries, scaling up of existing and new forms of governance and public administration capacities may be required to achieve development objectives. Daunting challenges of post-conflict reconstruction, crises and natural disaster management, global warming mitigation, systemic poverty of the "bottom billion" and the HIV/AIDS pandemic are not to be overcome through obsolete institutional arrangements, rigid bureaucracies or self-serving leadership. In this globalized world of 24/7 economic transactions, those countries face not only competition for ever shifting capital required for investments but also the responsibility of maintaining growth levels sufficient to finance the basic needs of their citizens. The following analysis reviews the new meaning and dimensions of

capacity development while outlining its systemic, organizational and individual modalities in the context of sustainable human development.

II. Essentials of capacity development in governance and public administration

8. According to the United Nations Development Group, capacity development refers to supporting national counterparts in developing their capacities to lead, manage, achieve and account for national development priorities. As such, capacity development is a process of establishing effective means for goal-setting, decision-making, standardizing routine procedures, planning and implementing activities, and monitoring and evaluation.

9. State-of-the-art capacity development takes a holistic and inclusive approach. Hence, capacity development not only encompasses designing and developing systems, institutions and policies but also covers facilitating effective organizations, planning and projects. Capacity development also includes processes and modalities for endowing these systems, institutions and organizations with a common vision while working to enhance the professional development of the individuals who function within them. The purview of capacity development thus now extends beyond the traditional inter-organizational dialogue and individual training. Capacity development today is also about streamlining practical standard operating procedures in line with context-specific norms and belief systems.

A. Systems-level capacity development: governance processes

10. The designing and reform of systems, institutions and policies require skills of coalition-building and multi-stakeholder dialogue as well as the ability to see economic, political, social, cultural and environmental forces as a whole. A constitution, a set of organic laws, regulatory frameworks overseeing various sectors, the degree of control and ownership of productive assets, and public decision-making processes for allocating public resources, among other major features, define and shape the State and its apparatus. Within this framework, integrative thinking can be learned by focusing on *all* of the factors and forces involved in a solution, and pondering how each element influences the others. Systems design is very different from problem-solving since the focus is on inventing a new form for the future rather than on merely responding to a past problem.

11. Systems comprise interlinkages of several institutions that are themselves composed of many organizations. For example, a legal system involves institutions providing access to justice, deliberation and reconciliation, and includes organizations such as courts, law firms, advocacy groups, media and non-governmental organizations. Systems also encompass all geo-social levels and linkages of local, national and transnational milieux with a concern for both vertical and horizontal flows of information and resources, and the capacity to scale up. Policies are seen as collective agreements that guide collective actions and establish the rules of the game. This dimension as a whole is often referred to as the "enabling environment" in state-of-the-art capacity development.

12. Capacity development in governance and public administration is a multidimensional process. It includes, inter alia, electoral processes, legislative bodies, rule of law and access to justice, human rights, public administration and civil service, decentralization, local governance and service delivery, accountability and transparency, the governance role of civil society and the private sector, multi-stakeholder policy formulation, international aid and absorptive capacity. All of these sectors and areas of governance are included within the context of a focused perspective on capacity-building: developing capacity of actors to self-realize their potentials *individually*; establishing and strengthening open, transparent and collaborative organizations *institutionally*; and promoting a common vision and instilling trust *systemically*.

13. At the systems level, broad processes of governance become the main areas of scrutiny. Capacity development to support the effective, transparent and accountable functioning of electoral, legislative, executive, judicial and societal processes is fundamental for effective governance and public administration. Electoral processes in developing countries often lack a multiparty system able to enhance political choices and a diversity of views. These countries need political parties that operate in a fair and just manner; independent electoral management bodies that ensure that the entire process is being carried out in an honest manner and is open to scrutiny; and candidates who have a genuine interest in representing and promoting the well-being of constituents, and have sufficient knowledge of development challenges and issues. To respond to these needs and challenges, building and enhancing the technical and knowledge-based capacity of electoral management bodies and other agencies entrusted with enforcing political finance regulation can become pivotal in promoting effective governance and public administration from early on. Training on, and exposure to, the other components and tools of managing electoral processes, such as plurality voting, the franchise, electoral districting and voter registration, can also increase the overall capacity for managing electoral processes.

14. Legislative bodies in developing countries need to be representative of the society as a whole. They need representatives with strong public service values. Members need to know how to collaborate for the sake of collective interests. An open and inclusive environment that encourages deliberation and discussion needs to be cultivated. Parliaments need to play their role in law-making and oversight and can effectively carry out these functions if some tools of capacity-building are in place and are working effectively. For instance, capacity-building in terms of providing research and analytical support for independent functioning of legislatures, buttressing their communications and outreach efforts as legitimate representatives of the public interest, well-functioning standing and ad hoc committees, and methods for minimizing partisan cleavages to promote cohesion can prove crucial for effective law-making and legislative oversight at all levels.

15. Capacity of the executive in priority-setting and collective decision-making is paramount for effective governance and public administration. To achieve sustainable development and effective governance, Governments must keep their political capacity consistent with desired policies. For this to occur, it is crucial for Government officials to know how to tap into human and material resources in their societies and use them to achieve national-level objectives. Many developing countries are hampered by inadequate or insufficient capacity to exploit these resources where they do exist. Increasing the Government's extractive capacity, consultations on priorities and enhancing the capacity of the political system to

carry out the tasks chosen by a nation's Government in the face of competing interests at the local, national and transnational levels are important in promoting policy stability, hence in building Government capacity.

16. In developing countries, judicial systems need to be independent, with judges and attorneys who have recognized expertise in law and are committed to justice and reconciliation. The rule of law needs to apply to all people of the land. A culture of respect for human rights needs to be promoted. The entire judicial system should be sensitive to the best of traditional justice processes (especially at the local level) that are in harmony with modern mechanisms. Moreover, people need to have access to justice processes regardless of economic or minority status. Clear and transparent rules concerning the appointment and removal processes of judges, the establishment and the delineation of the roles and obligations of such bodies as judicial councils and impeachment juries, and methods of promoting and strengthening judicial autonomy and access to adjudicative institutions can benefit the effective functioning of the judiciary in the developing world.

17. The governance roles of civil society face many challenges. Primarily they centre around the issues of their independence, their freedom to organize and carry out activities and accountability for their use of public resources. In addition, adequate training of the leaders in these organizations in social responsibility and the standards of transparency and accountability and adequate levels of resources of civil society organizations are essential in capacity development. For capacity-building, it is essential to introduce tools and modalities of cooperation and trust-building between public organizations related to civil society and the private sector so as to increase interface and foster joint mobilization to meet challenges proactively. Such processes can include interactive regional planning, intersectoral dialogue, citizen engagement in collaborative planning, and participatory and pro-poor budgeting.

18. The private sector, as it encompasses engines of wealth creation and contributes to the productivity and well-being of individuals and societies, fulfils an important need in economic governance. Challenges facing developing countries in this regard are lack of: jobs, income, services, products, savings, housing, markets, training, credit and fair trade accords. How to both create an enabling environment for the private sector and hold it accountable to the common good is a major challenge.

B. Organizations-level capacity development: policy implementation and administrative processes

19. As countries of the South attempt to achieve the Millennium Development Goals in a timely manner, they face capacity challenges including difficulties in implementing an effective pro-poor policy framework, in targeting essential interventions and scaling up successful ones in physical infrastructure and social sectors, in implementing participatory political decision-making processes and in tracking progress as well as in mobilizing the necessary finances. Compounding the differences in priorities of countries of the North and countries of the South is the fact that the absorptive capacity of the latter may also constrain the infusion of new resources and their effective deployment. In post-conflict and post-disaster

countries, destroyed physical infrastructure and humanitarian crises multiply the challenges to be confronted.

20. In view of the multiplicity and diversity of problems faced, it is necessary, before designing a capacity development programme, to carry out an assessment, however formal or informal, of current organizational capacities. If capacity development has been requested by national or local counterparts, a task force of key stakeholders should be formed. This task force, being cognizant of governmental and non-governmental actors and governance institutions critical to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, can then design a participatory plan of assessment and development at various levels and key sectors of a public administration. At all levels of authority (national, regional, provincial, county, city, town and village), public administrators need and rely and build on their organizational capacities. Teams could be appointed to assess and measure the capacities of key governance actors in all sectors. Tools include self-assessment, peer assessment and feedback from citizens or users of services. Are intended programme goals being met? How is the flow of information, communication, decision-making and resources between and among the various levels being maintained? Where do the strengths and gaps lie? What is working and what is not working and why?

21. Some instruments that can be used in designing and developing governance and administrative capacity at the public organization level are (a) strategic planning with the ultimate goal of direction-setting and adjustment, (b) a partnership approach through extensive networking, coalition-building and championing national ownership by Governments and communities, (c) team-building processes that encompass multidisciplinary engagement and change management, (d) administrative and fiscal decentralization to enhance accountability and inclusiveness of policymaking and (e) responsive service delivery of high quality. These instruments can also effectively be used to identify gaps resulting from the differences between emerging and obsolete policy environments.

22. Strategic planning and management entail the identification or reorientation of the mission and purpose of the organization, paths selected to achieve the mission and activities that affect stakeholders' interests. Strategic planning for Millennium Development Goals would reflect a pro-poor orientation. There are many excellent techniques of strategic planning available to public officials. In general, the facilitator asks participants to brainstorm and agree upon their common vision of the future, the challenges (blocks and gaps) they face in realizing that future, the broad strategic directions needed to deal with the challenges and achieve the vision, and the tactics or actions needed to achieve the strategies. These actions are then arranged on a timeline along with the designation of who will do what and when and where. This approach yields excellent results in crisis management.

23. Networking is another pillar of capacity development at the public organization level. A network can be defined as a set of nodes or actors connected by common interests rather than as a command-and-control structure, as in a bureaucracy. Communication and contact among administrative actors go hand in hand with networking activities. Success in achieving the Millennium Development Goals requires that public administrations focus on management as well as policymaking. Effective management at the public organization level depends on performance appraisal; the use of quasi-markets and contracting out to foster

competition, where appropriate; cost cutting and efficiencies; and an emphasis on results within administrative guidelines. Reforms that disaggregate monolithic public structures into smaller operating agencies based on specialization and division of labour can favour the forming of networks based on collaboration and partnership. The application of ICT can greatly enhance networking in public administration, providing channels for one-stop shops and single-window delivery systems for the purpose of scaling up basic services or reaching remote areas.

24. Networking provides a means for public administration institutions to reach out to governance actors outside of their boundaries, within their immediate and more distant communities. Non-governmental organizations, for instance, have considerable experience in working locally and can help municipalities with planning and capacity-building. Reciprocally, municipalities offer non-governmental organizations the legitimacy and local accountability they may lack, as well as the means to extend project activities beyond isolated communities. By the same token, formal and informal regional research networks that are based on communication, collaboration and ongoing dialogue among research institutions and public organizations at various levels and in various sectors, have contributed tremendously to capacity-building through the creation of viable knowledge communities, which are crucial for the dissemination of the technical information needed for realizing the Millennium Development Goals, within both North-South and South-South dimensions.

25. Seemingly intractable problems of stepping up the delivery of public goods and services to meet the Millennium Development Goals require coalition formation and team-building at every level of public administration. Proactive consultation, and effective and ongoing multidisciplinary teamwork may not only facilitate the timely completion of tasks but also improve the overall delivery of services. For instance, in cases when a long time may be spent in trying to solve a particular problem, soliciting client feedback, engaging citizens in the design of services, effective networking, collaboration and knowledge-sharing with peers may result in efficiencies and contribute to organizational learning in the public service. The most productive staff members in any organization are generally those with a very strong ability to network and collaborate with both external partners and internal colleagues. The promotion of an organizational culture of networking, knowledge-sharing and collaboration is essential to building organizational capacity.

26. One very useful team-building tool is the workshop method, which can be used in a public organization to generate creativity and new energy in a short amount of time, infuse the team with a sense of responsibility, catalyse integrated thinking and build a working consensus. This five-step technique begins by giving an overview of how the workshop integrates into daily activities, then goes on to generating new ideas by group brainstorming, identifying new relationships of data through clustering similar ideas or issues, determining the consensus through group naming of clusters of ideas, and confirming the resolve of the group to operate as a team. Interim measures may be needed for traditional hierarchic organizations until they are ready for more participatory methods. Interactive and participatory approaches to discussion, planning and problem-solving are often more effective than expert advice alone, as they utilize the wisdom of everyone and mobilize follow-up action resulting from a sense of ownership.

27. Decentralization, defined as the transfer of decision-making power and funds from central to local governments, can also have a strong impact on how effectively government resources are collected and used. For instance, research and practice have shown that politically decentralized regimes tend to tax less overall and administrative decentralization tends to encourage social policymaking. Administrative decentralization may allow competition, information and innovation to lead to efficient and effective public policies, and redistributive public action. Well-planned and prepared decentralization, coupled with strong monitoring, can improve human resource management in terms of fostering more effective staffing per sector and/or agency, the utilization of more locally grown skills and experience where needed, and more appropriate inputs to organizational performance — important for achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

28. The processes of decentralization involve the creation of local governance institutions which are paramount in promoting and harnessing increased political participation, accountability and trust. Communities establish and maintain direct links with their immediate representative officials and organizations on a day-to-day basis. This increases exposure of policymaking processes to citizens, supports the inclusiveness of decision-making processes, and has built-in feedback mechanisms that directly culminate in enhanced accountability. Principles of participation and partnership should guide the processes of decentralized governance at every level, since decentralization per se is not a sufficient force of capacity-building at the organizational level. In fiscal and administrative decentralization, analysis should reveal which functions are more appropriately undertaken at local, regional and national levels of governance and public administration systems in different countries.

29. Good governance and capable public administration depend not only on the performance of public organs but also on the State's capacity to deliver goods and services to its citizens. In a globalized world, public administration systems and institutions are adopting a more client-oriented perspective where quality management for the purpose of continuously updating and improving products and services is an urgent concern. In various parts of the world, particularly in developing countries, it is not only the lack of capital resources and technical know-how that impedes the access of citizens to health care, education, water, and basic goods and staples, but also the inadequate understanding and implementation of service delivery mechanisms in terms of their ability to reach targeted populations. In this context, the use of ICT can make services more effective, Governments more transparent and decision-making more efficient by fostering and facilitating networking, such as the building of municipal service partnerships and public-private partnerships to expand access to public goods and services.

30. Capacity-building in service delivery can also benefit from transparent performance appraisal, and contractual and procurement processes; effective monitoring; citizen feedback mechanisms; and accountability processes such as complaints and appeals procedures. Often, it is the responsibility of national or local councils to determine where the service provider will operate, how the service provision will be effected, and what the role and obligations of the recipients and providers of services will be. In this sense, the task of public councils in service delivery is not so much running the service as ensuring delivery. In cases where the decision to outsource delivery is taken, the councils set up the contract and make sure that it is duly enforced. The pros and cons of different outsourcing

arrangements and strategies for reducing the informational asymmetries originating from loopholes in sector-specific knowledge and expertise are some of the important issues whose resolution will require that the capacity of public administration organizations be built and strengthened.

C. Individual-level capacity development: professional competencies and merits

31. However much systems and organizations of a society are transformed, the individuals within these structures, whether governmental or non-governmental, are still the bedrock of that society and the source of its capacity to respond to crisis. If a parliament, for example, is restructured but individual parliamentarians still believe in the appropriateness of corrupt practices, the new structure is subverted. If a new judicial system is in place but individual judges and attorneys are not deeply committed to reconciliation and justice, then the new buildings, equipment and procedures become only a façade. For individuals to move beyond exclusionary self-interest and group interests, confusion or incompetence, individual abilities, values and skills must be enhanced. Hence, institutions and organizations must support functioning public servants in becoming more professional in carrying out their duties.

32. At the individual public servant level, capacity-building and development require leadership, career development and professional human resources management, responsiveness to community organizations and individual citizens, and well-functioning professional associations. Effective leadership is the first necessary ingredient in this holistic approach to capacity-building. Different types of leadership styles are required for different contexts and types of goals. For instance, a law enforcement or regulatory agency, which must standardize the interpretation of laws and regulations, may foster a more authoritarian leadership style than a policy shop which must utilize a more consensual leadership style to enable creativity and forward-thinking. Leaders can learn new ways of being effective that enable them to move beyond authoritarian and bureaucratic modes. Through shifting to a mode where skills and styles are focused on results, values and systems, the leader will achieve greater effectiveness in his or her role and gain legitimacy in the eyes of the public.

33. In capacity-building, a facilitator-leader is one of the most critical actors. Although not all leaders are born to be facilitators, the management style of a facilitator/leader can be learned: it is governed by principles of cooperation and trust, and supports the formation of alliances, partnerships, win-win solutions and ongoing organizational learning. As the facilitator-leader knows that a solution lies within the reach of the minds of the people concerned, he or she creates situations of interaction and dialogue conducive to the creation of a common mind and action plan. Such leaders have proved to be the pivotal force in the success of twinning as a sustainable capacity-building programme at the institutional level. Through twinning, facilitator-leaders have facilitated the forging of partnerships between organizations in developing and developed countries with similar remits. No longer do the experts with the technical knowledge travel to the recipient country to pass on their knowledge from top to bottom. Instead, an ongoing and interactive partnership is established locally, and the organizations as well as their new allies are nationally owned, thanks to facilitator-leaders' effective management style.

34. A facilitator-leader who can effectively engage in capacity-building and development is also perspectivist in that he or she relies on a systems view of the organization and its relationship to the environment. He or she is aware of the limitations of leadership and is concerned with integrity, flexibility, appropriateness and adaptability. Everyone in the organization is called upon to accept personal ownership and responsibility by having helped create and by having "bought in" to the vision, principles and mission of the organization. Each member of the team constantly assesses his or her own strengths and weaknesses, as well as those of the other team members, and strives for appropriate interaction. Such qualities and decision-making rationale can be instilled and passed on to current and would-be leaders not only through adequate training but also through participation in several community-stakeholder interactive dialogue schemes.

35. In addition to effective leadership, capacity-building at the individual public servant level requires the development by every public administration of a policy statement that defines how talent management will contribute to the achievement of its overall strategic objectives. Regardless of the specific human resources management strategy, that a Government chooses to adopt, it will need to provide professional human resources management support to the managers who make staffing decisions and develop career paths for public servants. The application of an integrated competence-based model can help develop career structures that employ a strategic mix of generalist and specialist functions. By promoting a consistent approach across all human resources management activities, the framework helps to ensure that personnel management contributes effectively to achieving the Government's objectives. Another integral part of strategic professional capacity development is a comprehensive incentives package that enables the public service to attract and retain talent. Adequate pay is widely considered a key factor in improving and sustaining the motivation, performance and integrity of public servants. Conversely, low salary levels result in absenteeism, alternative and additional employment, corruption and low productivity.

36. In terms of professional development, self-awareness and self-management are the foundation of individual capacity. If public servants are not aware of their professional strengths and weaknesses, then they cannot effectively perform their duties so as to serve the public good and be helpful to others. With self-awareness, one can begin to manage oneself for the benefit of others. Professional self-management includes management of one's time, relationships, moods, image and behaviour. Individual capacities of public administrators and servants should, where appropriate, be developed within various dimensions.

37. Individual public servants, from top leadership to front-line service providers, need to learn how to be creative, take risks, provide vision and observe professional standards of behaviour. If this does not occur, governance and public administration institutions will be impeded in achieving development objectives. Practical skills development for public servants is also essential. These skills, which encompass ongoing processes of learning by doing and reflection in action, include analysis, planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and reflection. Identifying appropriate training opportunities and providing access to various programmes will assist public servants in gaining the professional competencies needed to carry out their jobs.

38. The third important component of capacity development at the individual public servant level is the building of trust, dialogue and networking among public servants, and community organizations and individual citizens. Fostering consultation and cooperation among staff can also result in the formation of valuable social capital, and thereby contribute to more dynamic communications, knowledge-sharing and management within the public service. Such communication processes can be either facilitated or hindered by the existing institutional structures in the public sector. In traditional bureaucracies, for example, institutional structures and norms are often not conducive to effective communications or knowledge-sharing with clients or even among staff. Progressive and reform-minded organizations, on the other hand, use technology and incentives in addition to normal person-to-person exchange to encourage staff to consult with client groups, share knowledge, and collaborate with one another.

39. Finally, membership in active professional associations is essential to professional capacity-building. As there is a global shift towards a knowledge society, many public institutions are under growing pressure to behave like knowledge- and expert-based organizations. This will have implications for both individual capacity development and human resources management in the public service. Public agencies can greatly facilitate organizational learning in the public sector by developing an enabling environment that encourages staff to acquire, share and manage knowledge, to network and collaborate with colleagues and external partners, to document lessons learned and other tacit knowledge while constantly looking to the future, and to build up their skills in accordance with a competence-based capacity development framework.

40. Professional associations that regulate established professions, such as medicine, law and accounting, as well as functional communities of practice that involve multidisciplinary teams and core knowledge, such as those made up of development practitioners and even public administrators, can play a key role in promoting professional individual capacity. They can certify and license in respect of essential core knowledge, provide professional codes of conduct by which to regulate behaviour, and provide formal or informal mentoring arrangements among senior and junior members.

41. Recognition of the professionalism and knowledge of staff is central to the development of organizational learning in the public service. In traditional bureaucracies, the prestige and remuneration of staff are determined primarily by rank rather than by degree of professionalism or knowledge. This means that staff aspiring to senior positions may not have the competencies of knowledge leaders. On the other hand, organizations whose livelihood depends on knowledge generation and dissemination, such as universities, think tanks and consulting firms, generally place much greater emphasis on the development of mechanisms that recognize and reward innovation, professionalism, productivity and knowledge leadership of staff. Thus, capacity-building at the individual public servant level may emphasize the acquisition of knowledge, specialization and professionalism, which in turn feeds into more productive organizational functioning, and the operation of systems characterized by greater legitimacy and the greater adeptness of its members.

42. Gender mainstreaming and human rights-based approaches are also part of the skill set needed for public servants and administrators. Public servants can learn to

disaggregate by gender and ensure that women participate fully in an organization at all levels of decision-making. The human rights of members of an organization should also be constantly honoured and respect for those rights should be monitored. Interpersonal skills that enable people to listen deeply to each other and understand the meaning sometimes implicit in words, as well as accessible redress mechanisms, are also essential. Thus, leaders in capacity development not only must aim to move beyond diversity but should also be able to skilfully reintegrate gender, minority, disability and other challenges as strengths in organizations and teams.

III. Capacity development challenges of post-conflict reconstruction and crisis/disaster management

43. All countries face the common governance capacity development challenges of objectively assessing current capacities, making assessment participatory, overcoming resistance to change, shifting from risk-averse bureaucratic behaviour to innovation, retaining new capacities once developed, and accessing financial resources. However, post-conflict States and States managing crises and natural disasters have additional, reconstruction-related needs.

44. In both post-conflict and post-disaster countries, governance capacity challenges include relief of immediate suffering and the need to rebuild infrastructure, design new analytical and planning systems, and prevent and prepare for future disaster. These countries also need to catalyse partnerships among stakeholders, strengthen community participation, decentralize disaster management, reduce poverty, improve human security and promote gender equality, and pay greater attention to climate change, both present and future. Most importantly, countries emerging from crises need to restore the legitimacy and credibility of government in order to create a basis for trust, reconciliation (in cases of conflicts) and, ultimately, national cohesion.

45. While the specifics of re-creation and social mobilization efforts need to be tailored to the special circumstances of a post-conflict country, there are key components that must be incorporated if systems strong enough to withstand the strains of reconstruction and avert a return to conflict are to be established. Two parallel goals must be pursued: (a) to ensure the creation by high-level policymakers of a new (and what may sometimes turn out to be a diametrically different) approach and skills set for the participatory re-creation of key governance systems involving all stakeholders and (b) to undertake the decisive and strategic actions that will instil in the general populace renewed trust in the leadership, including the belief that the new systems are legitimate and inclusive and practise neither favouritism nor discrimination. The outcomes of these decision-making processes may be enshrined in a new constitution, outlining a fair sharing of powers, securing human rights, and giving shape to the State and its public administration, in general terms.

46. It is clear that there is no single action or measure that can generate trust and the consequent national cohesion. However, experience has shown that a careful mixture of conceptual and operational policy measures are key to ensuring that Governments rebuild their most critical capacities so as to deal with the disputes and conflicts that inevitably arise in the push to re-establish government institutions.

47. Serious and sustained interventions towards collaborative leadership development and decision-making for former antagonists are a sine qua non with respect to creating a conducive environment for negotiating the optimal non-conflictual structural foundations upon which governance systems can be built. This requires a long-term investment in targeted process interventions in leadership, negotiations and trust-building for a select group of 100-200 individuals from across the political and sectoral spectrum. Political leaders are notorious for engaging in negotiations that have the outward appearance of power-sharing, but that in fact just create divisions and establish the conditions conducive to continuous partisan manoeuvring. Creating new grounds for dialogue between former antagonists is one of the fundamental prerequisites for negotiating truly principled win-win governing arrangements. Such process interventions designed to build trust, dialogue and sincere working relationships take one to two years to develop, and so must be accompanied by many intermediate operational steps needed to form interim structures and keep them functioning and Governments running while longer-term decisions are being made.

48. For the general populace, a structured and graduated series of grass-roots level consultations need to be organized to determine the physical and social post-conflict needs of the many stakeholders and develop the most conducive approaches to addressing those needs. Such national consultative processes as have extended beyond the local level to inform national-level policymaking have demonstrated the effectiveness and "rootedness" of such practices which ensure that populations actually believe that their leadership have taken account of their voiced concerns and are working towards the greater common good.

49. Given the daunting and diverse responsibilities that rest on the shoulders of the public service in a post-conflict environment, policymakers and practitioners working in post-conflict recovery must ensure: (a) that the public service is reconstituted in inclusive, transparent ways; (b) that the public service is adequately prepared and resourced to undertake essential tasks; and (c) that the public servants themselves, and the citizens they serve, are made an intrinsic part of the participatory change process so that it can be a transformative process, and one that allows them to become the most effective contributors to, and champions of, their country's recovery.

50. As regards its composition and functioning, the public service constitutes a microcosm of the society in terms of its overall recovery and mirrors the larger governance environment. Thus, a representative, merit-based, service-oriented public service can provide a model for participation, inclusive decision-making, reconciliation and social cohesion, and proactive peace-building. There are four main areas where public service functioning and performance are key to changing attitudes and rebuilding societal trust. Public service can be most instrumental in building trust after crisis by: (a) engaging in internal capacity-building in order to be able to undertake the required tasks; (b) sustaining/improving service delivery; (c) acting transparently in terms of how it is constituted and in the discharge of its duties; and (d) engaging in its work in a participatory, decentralized manner so that local government officials have sufficient autonomy to respond appropriately to specific conditions.

51. Capacity-building is a continuous and permanent process in as much as goals, innovations, technologies and required governance, administration and professional

skills are constantly changing. Post-conflict situations characterized by the rebuilding of public service do not therefore represent the only context within which capacity-building activities can and should be undertaken to manage crisis and post-crisis. It is equally, if not more important to engage in capacity-building towards the prevention of, and the preparedness for, crisis before it actually strikes. This is also true for management of a disaster, which can be defined as a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society, causing widespread human, material, economic and environmental losses and exceeding the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources.

52. Management and reduction of disaster risks have become one of the core development activities and concerns in capacity development processes in recent years. Disaster risk management, in contrast with post-conflict reconstruction, precedes the onset of an expected crisis in the form of a pandemic, tsunami, flood, cyclone, earthquake, drought or other calamity originating from the environment and/or environment-related sources. As such, disaster risk management is a systemic process of using administrative decisions, organization, operational skills and capacities to implement policies, strategies and community-based programmes of action to lessen the impacts of natural hazards and related environmental and technological disasters.

53. Disaster risk management comprises four phases, each of which is associated with distinct yet interdependent processes of policymaking: (a) assessment of priorities and mitigation, (b) preparedness, (c) early warning and (d) rehabilitation. Assessment of priorities and mitigation refers to the evaluation and identification of vulnerable areas and groups through an analysis of risk perception. Risk perception analysis factors in data derived from variables and indicators such as shifting patterns in land-use, urban and suburban development trends, environmental degradation, and climate change. Areas with high-density populations, poverty, high income disparity and inadequate structures are those prone to disaster. The poor, women and children, and the elderly are social groups that suffer most in the event of a disaster.

54. In the second (preparedness) phase of disaster risk management, response and infrastructure plans are developed through a multi-hazard approach. The multi-hazard approach refers to the mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction policies into development policies. By building the capacity of local and national Governments to legislate, plan and implement the necessary measures concerning the social protection of the poor, the safe and adequate building and construction of sites and infrastructures, the protection of the environment and the mitigation of the effects of climate change, the consequences of expected disasters can be mitigated. Finally, in the response and recovery phases, already developed action plans based on previous needs assessments are put into practice, followed by the relevant monitoring and evaluation systems of post-disaster recovery processes. Like the two previous phases, the final recovery phase is also based on the active participation of communities in the planning and implementation of plans of action, since it is the since local populations who best know their needs and challenges.

55. Local and national Governments can also streamline disaster management into development policies through their direct support of clean sustainable development and by directly including climate change in policymaking. Towards that end, environmental awareness must be built and raised vis-à-vis the production,

consumption and monitoring of clean and renewable energy sources in ways that are attentive to ozone layer depletion and deforestation. Due regard should also be given to carbon emissions and innovative recycling incentives and strategies. Making sure that adequate education on climate change and environment is introduced early on in school curricula is one of the most important steps towards the building of environment-friendly cultures. On the economic plane, it is crucial to plan and implement growth strategies that are less polluting, including adequate regulatory frameworks revolving around new taxation policies as well as alliances with the private sector on industrial and investment strategies and methodologies, including those geared towards the scaling up of programmes and activities to leverage clean development. Finally, the third dimension of mainstreaming climate change into development agendas entails social policymaking, for instance, by putting emphasis on the risks faced by the most vulnerable and the less empowered social groups and countries in the context of pursuing sustainable development.

56. Experience has shown that traditional methods of organization for critical decision-making will not suffice in the case of a catastrophic breakdown. In the immediate aftermath of a disaster, an effective response will depend on the adaptive behaviour of citizens, front-line workers and middle managers. The new paradigm for disaster management thus includes a shift from centralized and reactive emergency relief programmes to locally owned and proactive risk reduction strategies. The new paradigm includes tools and modalities such as disaster research and training, inclusive finance techniques such as microfinance disaster preparedness schemes and disaster loan funds, gender-specific disaster management policies, evacuation techniques, technicalities of dissemination of information through forecasts to endangered areas, establishing command centres and integrating post-disaster care, etc. In this regard, capacity-building becomes paramount for three reasons. It is essential: (a) for mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into local governments' annual and medium-term development plans, (b) for raising awareness among the executive and the legislative branches of government on the importance of disaster risk reduction, including indigenous knowledge, gender issues and other social aspects of risk management and (c) for promoting cooperation and coordination among all relevant stakeholders engaged in humanitarian affairs.

IV. Recommendations

57. **It is clear that building governance and public administration capacities for reaching the Millennium Development Goals requires countries to address the six priority areas identified by the Committee in 2002, as outlined in paragraph 2 above. What is also clear to the Committee as its work in capacity development deepens is that effective governance and improved public administration, particularly in post-conflict and post-crisis/disaster situations, involve systems-level capabilities of designing governance institutions, reforming their processes and developing new patterns of interaction. Organizationally, capacity-building focuses on the establishment and development of effective networks, teams and functional communities. Fostering an enabling organizational culture and the creation and harnessing of synergy among group members become the major areas of interest in ensuring that organizations are fully operational, capable and legitimate. On the**

individual level, enhancing the professional capabilities of public servants requires leadership, career development and professional human resources management, responsiveness to community organizations and individual citizens and well-functioning professional associations.

58. **This holistic approach to capacity-building towards the successful implementation of the internationally agreed goals of sustainable development, including the Millennium Development Goals, is intrinsically context-driven. What works in one locality might not work in another. Post-conflict, post-crisis and post-disaster situations complicate matters. In consequence, the path-driven history of institution-building, the history of ideas on development, and the commonalities and differences among communities making up a nation should all be taken into account by effective leaders and public administrators.**

59. **The following is a list of recommendations on capacity development in governance and public administration:**

For Member States:

60. **As they are halfway towards the deadline of 2015 for achieving the Millennium Development Goals as set in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, and implementing other internationally agreed development goals, Member States need to continuously take stock of their progress, including governance and public administration capacity development needs. In addition to continuing to address the six priority areas identified by the Committee in 2002, Member States should invest heavily in:**

(a) **Strengthening governance and public administration through a holistic approach to systems', organizational and individual capacity needs;**

(b) **Dialogue with civil society, including multi-stakeholder inclusion and participation, for equity and empowerment in development processes;**

(c) **Addressing additional capacity development needs of post-conflict and post-disaster situations, including capacities for prevention;**

(d) **Judicious management of material and environmental resources, particularly in light of present and future climate change;**

(e) **Orienting donor partners towards understanding the unique politico-economic and sociocultural environment of beneficiary countries.**

For the Economic and Social Council

61. **At the high-level segment of its 2008 substantive session, the Council should:**

(a) **Highlight governance and public administration capacity development needs of Member States in implementing the international development agenda, including the Millennium Development Goals;**

(b) **Incorporate this dimension during the annual ministerial review of progress of Member States in reaching the internationally agreed goals pertaining to sustainable development. The Council may wish to better**

integrate the governance and public administration capacity development dimension in its deliberations on the peace-development nexus.

For the United Nations Secretariat

62. **The Secretariat may consider:**

(a) **Reorienting its work on capacity-building so as to focus more strategically on strengthening governance and public administration for the purpose of achieving Millennium Development Goals;**

(b) **Focusing on assisting post-conflict countries with reconstruction of governance and public administration in the next *World Public Sector Report*, including lessons learned and capacity-building needs;**

(c) **Issue a policy brief on the same;**

(d) **Develop and scale up other analytical and capacity-building tools in the area of governance and public administration for the purpose of assisting those Member States that are lagging behind in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.**

V. Conclusion

63. **Member States, the Economic and Social Council and the United Nations Secretariat can all participate more effectively and efficiently in capacity-building in the governance and public administration systems of developing countries — particularly those in crisis, post-conflict and post-disaster situations — if they understand that capacity-building today entails more than institution-building and more even than institutional and organizational development. Capacity-building entails both of these undertakings, and unfolds within the context of a country's unique and larger vision of a sustainable development framework. Furthermore, institution-building, organizational strengthening and individual professional development may be seen differently by the various parties involved in the reform process. Hence, it is essential that issues of interpretation by all the actors involved be explored early on in the assessment process so that differences in expectations can be managed, and all views can be included in the design of capacity-building and development projects and processes.**

64. **The systems-level, organizational and individual components of capacity-building and development as perceived through holistic and context-driven lenses are the primary means of promoting and instilling sound governance practices and effective public administration reform. All rational-strategic, organizational learning, and individual self-realization means of capacity-building can best be harnessed and applied interchangeably in given contexts within the framework of the partnership and continuous learning of all the parties involved.**